

“APEC+” vs “+APEC”:

A Collaborative Initiative from Shanghai and Hong Kong Think Tanks

Amid accelerating changes unseen in a century, and with global political and economic volatility and turmoil on the rise, China will host the 33rd Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Leaders’ Meeting (AELM) in November 2026, with the aim of providing greater certainty, stability, and positive momentum to global economic growth and international cooperation. As co-organizers of the “Global Prosperity Summit 2026”, Savantas Policy Institute of Hong Kong and the Shanghai Institutes for International Studies are actively promoting APEC’s theme of “Building an Asia Pacific Community to Prosper Together”. We are committed to promoting in-depth dialogue and consensus-building through the international platform of the Global Prosperity Summit, thereby helping to jointly foster a new future of sustainable global prosperity.

The Asia-Pacific region is a vital engine of the global economy, and APEC remains essential to advancing global prosperity. We fully support the role APEC has played in promoting free and open trade and investment, and we believe the “APEC+” framework will further strengthen APEC’s integration with subregional, cross-regional, and other multilateral cooperation frameworks, enabling APEC to play a greater integrating and coordinating role in the process of regional economic integration. We encourage all member economies to place greater emphasis on APEC’s role and future potential. Through the “+APEC” approach, member economies can further align with multilateral platforms in areas such as trade, investment, regulation, industrial and supply chains, and people-to-people exchanges to further solidify the foundation for future prosperity.

The success of both Shanghai and Hong Kong has been built upon a free and open international trade order, as well as regional cooperation in the Asia-Pacific. Hence, during the APEC “China Year,” our two think tanks are jointly putting forward a set of initiatives aimed at sending a positive message to the international community – that regional economic and trade cooperation remains the cornerstone of peace and prosperity. At the same time, we hope to inject new momentum into APEC cooperation from the non-governmental sector by

providing Chinese wisdom and solutions to the realization of global prosperity. To this end, we hereby propose the following eight initiatives:

1. **Safeguard the multilateral trading system.** All APEC stakeholders should unequivocally support and advance practical cooperation in areas such as the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific, connectivity, the digital economy, and artificial intelligence, thus injecting greater vitality and momentum into the development of the Asia-Pacific, while also contributing to the maintenance of a sound international economic and trade order.
2. **Adhere to the goal of Asia-Pacific common development.** All APEC stakeholders should stay committed to APEC's founding mission to promote economic growth and improve people's well-being, and pursue open development that enables members to share opportunities and achieve mutual benefit. They should promote universally inclusive economic globalization, and advance common development in the Asia-Pacific region.
3. **Advance the vision for common prosperity.** We encourage APEC stakeholders to collaborate around the three priorities of "openness, innovation, and cooperation". By building open economies, pursuing innovation-driven growth, and cultivating new quality productive forces, APEC members can leverage their comparative advantages and strengthen information sharing and policy exchanges, thereby achieving win-win cooperation.
4. **Seize the opportunities in China's development.** The APEC "China Year" coincides with the launch of China's 15th Five-Year Plan. China remains committed to advancing high-standard opening up and will continue to share the benefits of its opening up to the world, providing new opportunities for the Asia-Pacific and the world through the latest achievements of Chinese modernization. We welcome all APEC member economies and stakeholders to engage with Hong Kong and Shanghai to gain a deeper

understanding of China, invest in China, and build a shared future with China.

5. **Promote local cooperation to unlock the potential of “+APEC.”** Cities serve as vital platforms of global economic development and exchange, and can foster multidimensional cooperation and advance frameworks for open and free trade. In order to foster exchanges at the local level, we recommend strengthening provincial-level and city-level exchanges in areas such as trade and economy, youth, and think tanks, while exploring ways to enhance cooperation to unlock the potential of “APEC+”, in line with the vision of “Building an Asia-Pacific Community” for the APEC China Year.
6. **Strengthen exchanges among Chinese cities hosting APEC events.** Chinese cities currently hosting APEC events can collaborate with other Chinese cities that have hosted APEC events in previous years to explore ways to strengthen coordination and information sharing regarding APEC cooperation efforts, therefore harnessing China’s experiences to bolster exchanges among cities and contribute to APEC cooperation.
7. **Establish an “APEC Think Tank Cooperation Council.”** We recommend that representative think tanks from APEC member economies form the APEC Think Tank Cooperation Council. The Council should organize an APEC Think Tank Forum, and conduct joint research and provide policy recommendations for cooperation across all levels and sectors of APEC, with a particular focus on enriching and expanding the scope of APEC cooperation from a forward-looking and constructive perspective.
8. **Maximize the potential of “APEC+” and “+APEC.”** Hong Kong will host the APEC Finance Ministers’ Meeting (FMM) this October. This will further leverage the unique advantages of the “One Country, Two Systems” framework, and maximize the potential of “APEC+” and “+APEC” by utilizing APEC as an opportunity to deepen its cooperation with Shenzhen and other cities in the Greater

Bay Area, and promote mutual exchanges and common development with other APEC members in areas including trade and investment, culture and tourism, science and technology, higher education, and the arts.

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